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In this examination of the behavior and motivations of U.S. prisoners of war held in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, particular emphasis is given to the influence of environmental conditions, the emotional state of men, and the mutual support of other prisoners. Motivational elements of pride, responsibility, and individual values are stressed. Group characteristics of cohesiveness, interaction, and unity as a means by which the POWs sought to control their destiny are also illustrated, while an abbreviated discussion of prison life provides some appreciation for the shrunken world of a prisoner of war.

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Newport, R.I.

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR HELD BY THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

by

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A Term Paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Command and Staff Management Course.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

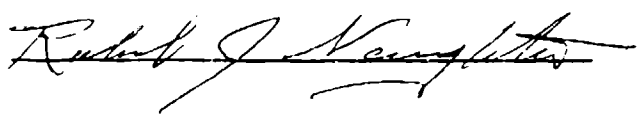

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR HELD BY THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

January 1973 concluded the longest armed conflict in the 200-year history of the United States. Sixty days after the signing of the Paris agreement, the longest recorded incarceration of American Prisoners of War (PWs) ended for more than 500 men, and over 450 of that number were held in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Several of these men had endured more than eight years as a prisoner of the DRV while one PW held by the "Viet Cong" was detained over nine years.

The PWs received a warm and tumultuous welcome from the people of the United States. The expressions of national joy not only moved each PW, but also served to create an unanimity among Americans which had been lacking during the long years of the Vietnam conflict. The nation's public display of pride and relief rivaled that shown at the conclusion of World War II. This was evidenced by the live television coverage of the PW's return to friendly hands which was aired to the world even in the early hours of the morning. Extensive attention was given by all segments of the media to the receptions at home and the long awaited

family reunions. The coverage given to the returnees was media response to a genuine interest and concern that Americans held for "their" PWs. Replying to this public curiosity, unrestrained returnees addressed themselves to questions that ranged from physical conditions of prison life, to opinion on the war, to first impressions of changes in American life styles. These anecdotes interested many people and were duely reported by the news media.

The Vietnam PWs, however, were not the first prisoners of war who had received publicity. Those American men who had been held prisoners of all recent wars have been the subject of public examination and their return to the United States has provided a great deal of human interest newscopy. But more significant than the revelations to satisfy curiosity were the numerous studies that delved more deeply into the PWs stories. Numerous articles and books, as well as scientific studies, have related not only the events, but also have examined the causal factors of behavior, the standards of conduct, and the lessons to be learned from PW experiences.

The Post-Korean period was the most lucid example of such investigations. Eugene Kinkead's widely read book, In Every War But One, based on psychological factors that influenced the prisoners, emphasized the poor conduct of American PWs in Korea. Also, the conclusions reached in the Secretary of Defense Advisory Committee POW Report were

highly critical of individual and overall performance of the prisoners. The report prompted the issuance of the Executive Order Code of Conduct. The perceived necessity for an executive order delineating the expected standard of conduct for PWs was de facto condemnation of Korean PWs. For the U. S. servicemen, who served honorably as PWs in Korea, it is unfortunate that the books defending their conduct, such as, March to Calumny, received less notoriety than those which condemned. Thus, due tc the inequitable distribution of facts, the public stigma of weakness, self-interest and collaboration has been worn by many gallant American PWs of the Korean War who have not deserved such degradation. However, it will not be the intent here to debate the guilt stigma of Korean PWs nor to exhonorate the innocent. Instead it will be noted that writings do exist which examine PW behavior in that war.

Now there exists another group of subjects, the Vietnam prisoners, whose experiences might substantiate, repudiate or expand upon the findings of the studies of prisoners held in previous wars. A military examination of the Code of Conduct's influence on Vietnam's PWs and its further applications, a psychological investigation into the personality effects from six, seven, eight or nine years of foreign detention, and the sociological problems involved in living five years with the same man under adverse stress conditions

should be of intense interest for research. The findings could be of value to military leaders, behavioral scientists as well as any human beings who have more than a casual curiosity towards their fellowman. Such studies ought to be objectively conducted by scientists schooled in behavioral patterns in order that the maximum military and civilian utilization might be made of the results. The sociological, psychological and individual behavior findings could have application for various groups and individuals.

Scope and Purpose. In the hope that the future will provide in-depth and scholarly studies of the Vietnam prisoner situation, this paper is offered as a preliminary examination of the major factors that motivated U. S. prisoners of war to resist their captors. The point of view given is not one whose source material relies on official reports, questionnaires, or formal interviews, but is is drawn from my six years of actual imprisonment in the DRV. Complementing my experiences, introspections and observations are the narratives and reflections of the 118 other prisoners with whom I shared a cell at various times.

The personally observed subjects of this paper, all taken captive between the years 1965 and 1968, were chance selected from a cross section of Air Force and naval officers between the ages of twenty-three and forty. The length of

service ranged from six to fifteen years, and 85% held college degrees. The men's backgrounds represented the entire spectrum of American culture.

Consideration of the motivations and behavior of men in a unique situation implies that environment is an important determinant of human action. In order to understand the motivation of men as prisoners of war, it seems necessary to outline the conditions in which they lived. Therefore, a description of the circumstances under which the observations were made is included.

Throughout this paper, one will also detect the omnipresent emotional stress in various forms and its causal influence on the behavior of the prisoner of war. This chameleon of pressure emanated from many sources, and to some extent, still exists in the mind of the returnees. The importance of environmental and emotional influences which motivate captives cannot be overstated.

The particulars of a PW's life in Vietnam as to where he lived, the captor's attitudes, and the stresses that bear on a captive can be best analyzed in three phases:

1. Capture and initial interrogation.
2. Living alone.
3. Living in groups.

Observations concerning the first two phases will, by necessity, be drawn from my personal experiences. These

views will be tempered, however, by other prisoners' experiences and reflections as related by the men who lived them and by interprisoner discussions held in prison. It will be seen that in spite of the commonality of conditions within the prisons, each man's situation might be termed unique.

It should be stressed that the interpretations of attitudes, personality traits and motivational factors are solely my own and do not necessarily represent a consensus of all PWs. Some conclusions may fall into the category of opinion and subjective perceptions. But points of agreement as well as in conflict with accepted behavioral theories will be noted. Some correlations and contradictions have been omitted since the main purpose of this paper is to relate observations, not merely to expound on well-documented theories of behavior and group dynamics.

No amount of descriptive words can completely peel back the skin of the PW and reveal his innerself. But perhaps an acquaintance with the confined environment in which a PW must survive and some insight into the methods by which a man copes with this situation will help the reader better understand his actions.

A prisoner's world is subject to a variety of influences, both internal and external. These influences can cause a man's perceptions to expand and contract as the situation

changes. Hence, conscious acts, willful choices and resistance motivations have shifting roots within a prisoner. For example, the rationale of a new captive differs from that of a man hardened by years of prison life; a consuming injury can alter one's outlook, and resistance with group support is not the same as standing alone. The expansion of individual experiences to general behavioral axioms by which motives are assigned to all PWs is inherently dangerous, but some factors of resistance behavior are universal. Such general propositions observed to be true are examined in this paper.

CHAPTER II

CAPTURE AND INITIAL INTERROGATION

Capture. Consider, if you will, a pilot in the relative safety of a smooth flying jet aircraft with the comforts of a CVA "ready room" fresh in his mind. Within a few frantic seconds, a man copes with the dangers of enemy defenses, the shock of his aircraft being hit, the struggle to control the disabled plane, the abrupt ejection and an unwanted parachute descent with its inherent perils. Now he finds himself huddling in a flooded rice paddy, prayerfully watching friendly aircraft futilely strafe the surrounding area in an effort to ward off his captors. Minutes later, he is standing "skivvie-clad" and tightly-bound amidst a crowd of angry, club-waving Vietnamese peasants, screaming in a language unintelligible to him. Instantly, he is a prisoner of war!

When such events occur in staccato fashion within fifteen-to-twenty minutes, they represent an abrupt, disconcerting change. The most dominant emotion at the time of capture is a sense of bewildering fear in the surroundings of an alien atmosphere. The uncertainty of one's ultimate fate under these circumstances poses the possibility of ignominious death in a rice paddy and the likelihood of sudden, permanent separation from family, home and country.

Things held dear take on greater importance when they are no longer accessible. Embodied in this sense of loss is the uncertainty of time. How long? Ever? I vividly recall saying to myself, as I was being stripped and bound by the dozen Vietnamese peasants who captured me, "Bob, this is certainly going to be an experience!" Had I known at the time just how long an experience, I might have entered this ordeal with a less positive attitude.

The uncertainty also concerns the captor's disposition. Recollected tales of Oriental torture methods can be rather foreboding to one who "drops into" an unfriendly Asiatic country at war. Recent shipboard briefings concerning captive conditions in the DRV were sketchy, at best. The only factual information recalled was of the experiences of LT Dieter Dengler, USNR, who was captured and escaped in Laos in 1966. Such a recollection does nothing to raise one's expectations. There exists a nagging doubt in the newly captured man's mind as to what exactly will be required of him in the days to come. Contained within these uncertainties is the looming question, how will one stand the test? Trial by fire is the ultimate examination. It is surprising how quickly a man can grasp each of these concepts as they race through his mind.

The flight from freedom surely could occur at a slower pace. For some the transition from pilot to prisoner might

be more gradual, and perhaps the hostile Vietnamese reception might be more or less extreme than that described above. For some pilots, the overpowering pain of personal injury incurred during shoot-down, or ejection from the aircraft, exaggerates the circumstances of capture. But regardless of the details of each man's story, until the new arrival can assess the situation and adjust to his new environment, the emotion of fear prevails. Fear of the unknown is an uncomfortable, but a well known sensation. However, an abrupt transformation to unknown surroundings magnifies that fear. Throughout captivity, some form of fear is a prisoner's constant companion, and it is always capable of influencing his behavior. It is more accurate to say that in the years ahead, the PW will learn to control his fear rather than conquer i

Behavior at such a time is patterned largely by instinct, instinctive in the sense that one acts as a programmed individual and soldier. Such programming may be defined as a resultant of information bits acquired through age, cultural experiences and training. That one's actions are instinctive means that resistance efforts draw on past learning and values formulated earlier in life. The training in survival school teaches a PW to resist the enemy by saying nothing but name, rank, serial number, and date of birth. The Code of Conduct for American prisoners of war embodies the spirit

of a PW's resistance. Past survival school training and the ingrained knowledge that the Code of Conduct is the order of the day give a man an instinctive modus operandi from the outset of captivity. Despite considerable time in tight bonds, frequent beatings, and the use of other clever pain devices, some men endure the arduous trip to Hanoi without revealing more than the Code of Conduct stipulates.

However, resistance as contained in the Code of Conduct is often tempered by the existing situation and a man's emotional and physical state. One event during my trip to the DRV capital city should be cited. The opportunity to escape from my captors presented itself. This would have entailed killing two Vietnamese guards. I possessed the means, but not the inclination, to perform such an act. With full knowledge that the Code of Conduct says to make every effort to escape, within the moment afforded me for decision, I chose not to make the attempt. Perhaps I was restrained by a value for life which would not permit me to slit a throat. However, is slitting a throat different from dropping a bomb? Or, maybe the futility of successful escape under these conditions prevented me from acting. After all, being a six-foot three-inch Caucasian presented a unique problem in any attempt to evade among the Orientals. Years of reflection tell me my decision not to escape was a rational non-act based on fears, values, and expectations.

That event was the first of many situations that opened an insight to myself, and fueled the fires of introspection.

A PW soon comes to realize he is completely on his own, and is shocked by the responsibility this aloneness represents. Subconsciously loneliness is present as the PW is displayed to the North Vietnamese people in the days immediately subsequent to capture. Communist cadres are masters at exciting their people to a fevered, emotional pitch. The people become angry mobs. Wrinkled old women, with betel nut stained teeth, flail gnarled fists at bound American pilots; stick-yielding children seek to strike a blow at "their" enemy; angry peasants, on the verge of violence, glare at the American through hate-filled eyes. To say it is a lonely position, as a helpless object of this wrath, is no exaggeration.

Another manifestation of the subconscious loneliness is the relief one feels when an American aircraft passes overhead. This nostalgia and sense of kinship with other pilots are experienced by United States PWs in Hanoi during every bombing raid from May, 1967 to April, 1968. The sight and sound of a Thunderchief or Phantom over Hanoi is a comforting sensation, rather than one of fear for physical harm from an errant bomb. These few exciting moments provide a brief respite from the gnawing loneliness inside each prisoner of war.

Initial Interrogation. The real impact of being completely alone does not surface in one's consciousness until the new captive is delivered into the hands of the Hanoi interrogators. With a twisted body aching for relief from the constant pain inflicted by the binding ropes, the favorite Vietnamese torture device, one realizes that survival school training provides only a starting point for solving the problem of denying the inquisitors information. It is the captive, alone, who must determine a further course of action. The question each PW answers alone is--how to remove the hurt and not submit.

Resolving the dilemma of resistance and survival is exacerbated by the strict rules that prevail in the captor-captee relationship. It is unlikely that an American prisoner has previously been involved in a contest where the stakes have been so high and the regulations so invariable. A man's life in the United States is a series of second chances, getting a break, or receiving a helping hand. But in a Hanoi interrogation cell, such relief does not occur. Here, there is no chance that someone will enter the sweat-stained room with the bumpy walls, designed to muffle screams, and say, "We will let you go this time, but don't do it again," and to compound the problem, there is no survival school time limit on this test. A man could remain in this predicament a long time. So enduring the pain of torture "just

a little longer" is not necessarily the answer.

The aloneness of a situation in an interrogation room brings the responsibility and associated obligations directly to the individual. One now realizes he has commitments to meet, and how he meets them is a measure of his worth. The commitments and obligations take various forms. A man feels an obligation to his squadron mates back on the ship who are still actively involved in the war. He cannot give information that may endanger their lives. There also exists a responsibility to the men who are already PWs. A new PW must resist in order to gain acceptance to this group. Certainly the PW group would never accept a man who breaks under pressure. Sooner or later, one must face the men who have endured years of prison hardship and multiple trials. Most vividly perceived is a responsibility to oneself. Is a man a professional solider or not? Can he meet the challenge that others have met?

Perhaps this is what loyalty or devotion to duty really is. In later periods of PW life, devotion to duty and patriotism may be an accurate description of resistance motivation. However, in the early days of captivity, one cannot take credit for such a high principled motive. Pride is a more correct motivational assessment during the days of early captivity. Pride is a driving desire to prove yourself to yourself and to those whose opinion you respect and

this strong desire for self-respect, the main reason many endured torture to the point of crippling pain. The combination of pride and obligation seems to motivate men, time and time again, to resist to the limit of their endurance. Torture is endured despite the knowledge that the prisoner will probably be forced to conform in the long run.

Other prisoners' experiences, and my own long hours of quiz sessions (interrogations) during the first weeks, lead me to conclude that pride, more than anything else, puts us in the torture ropes during these sessions. The same logic, however, implies that pride is the essence of resistance in each man. The question now arises whether pride is generated from responsibility, duty, country, values, or a combination of all. Many times, PWs would have chosen death rather than further humilation, but the timeless pain of being bound by ropes does not offer that alternative. Based on how prisoners resist in their early torture sessions, it seems that their determination is egoistic rather than altruistic. One is tested alone, suffers alone, and resists alone. Ego centered motives derive their limits from ingrained values. These values establish norms for a man to be a man, and the strength of his convictions determines how much he will endure to meet that standard.

It is important to note that physical well being as well as mental resolve influence a prisoner's conduct.

Strong physiological needs are always present for a PW. Examples of men craving water even before their parachutes deliver them to earth are common. Several sweltering days without washing, plus involuntary emersion in rice paddy water with a human excrement additive, produces an almost maniacal desire for a bath; cleanliness becomes very dear to all PWs in the years of captivity. For many men, maimed in the course of capture, physiological priorities center on injuries and a struggle to stay alive. The emotional shock and stress of capture, as described earlier, are multiplied when accompanied by serious injury. Still, men with twisted legs, shattered arms, crushed faces and flame-charred bodies, do resist from the outset rather than seek aid by compromising their principles. But such action is beyond the ordinary and cannot be expected from all. It is a strong motivation that induces a physically disabled man to select the arduous course of action because of what he knows is expected of him.

Neither statistics of injuries, resistance and torture, nor a narrative of prison experiences, are sufficient to illustrate a PW's attitude. Thus, a dramatic portrayal has been attempted herein to create a more connotative description of how a captive is influenced by perceptions of self-preservation, multiple responsibility as well as resignation to fate's yoke. However, the conclusions drawn regarding

PW motivation are the product of one man's thoughts. It seems appropriate to examine the writings of behavioral scientists for possible supporting or conflicting arguments.

The attempts of learned men to explain human motivation have produced theories that expound generalities so broad that application to specific situations is extremely difficult outside of controlled laboratories. No one theory encompasses the entire prisoner of war situation, but several seem to have applicable hypotheses.

The theory that environment and its associated stresses are behavioral and motivational determinants appear to be supported in the writings of Atkinson.[1] His model assumed that particular environmental properties serve to stimulate or arouse various motives, and that changes in the perceived environment result in changes in the patterns of aroused motivation. Differing perceptions are exemplified by the behavior of the new prisoner, who reacts instinctively to a change in prison conditions, and that of a seasoned PW who is more calculating. The latter's behavior becomes pragmatic as he attempts to take advantage of fluctuations in the camp disciplinary mood. Therefore as the severity of conditions lessen, he is motivated to exhibit more overt resistance.

Some elements of PW behavior that have been labeled motivational factors may not fit the definition of some

scientists. Maslow, for one, cautioned against failure to distinguish between geographical and psychological environment as well as delineating between situation theory, behavioral theory and motivational theory. As he pointed out:

> Sound motivation theory must never become pure situation theory . . . behavior is determined by several classes of determinants, of which motivation is one and environment forces is another.[2]

Maslow might very well claim that the analysis put forth in this paper borders on motivational theory derived purely from the situation. In the sense that the nature of this study assumes environment and its psychological climate stimulates a particular motive or set of motives, such a claim might be valid.

The interaction of environment and motivation with behavior seems to be tied together rather well by Simon and March in their influence theory. They maintained that memory content includes all sorts of partial and modified records of past experiences and programs for responding to environmental stimuli. Moreover, memory content includes (a) values and goals, (b) relations between actions and their outcome, and (c) alternatives or possible courses of action.[3] Therefore, when the environmental stimuli are new, the search for alternatives will invent entirely new performance programs where they are not available in the memory.[4]

There appears to be no basic conflict in the contention that, under new environmental conditions, the PW's programmed actions have their roots in memory content of training and responsibility values. As the new prisoner reaches a point where his training will not sustain him, he considers various alternatives and their consequences regarding himself and others. Where it has been stated that this investigation of possible modes of behavior is influenced by uncertainties and the ultimate decision based on pride and responsibility, Atkinson[5] seemed to hold that this kind of search is a function of expectations and incentive values. In that uncertainty and responsibility equate to expectation and incentive, there is a direct parallel in this paper's conclusion and that of Atkinson.

Pride has been assessed as the foundation of early resistance. Maslow, however, pointed out that very little research has been done to relate ego-strength and motivation:

> Not only have we been ducking the problem of responsibility and will, but also their corollaries of strength and courage. Recently the psychoanalytic ego psychologists have waked up to this great human variable and have been devoting a great deal of attention to 'ego strength.' For the behaviorist, this is still an untouched problem.[6]

Psychologists ma· have neglected consideration of the concept of pride when they assigned causal factors to behavior, but to one who has spent six years in a prisoner

of war camp, pride is clearly evident as a motivation. The personal conflicts and the multiple resistance decisions a man faces as a PW are directly governed by his strength of conviction, and the extent a man acts according to his beliefs is directly proportional to his ego strength. It is not surprising that psychologists have conducted little research in the field of prisoner of war motivation, for the recruitment of subjects might produce very few volunteers.

The behavior and motivation of the newly captured PW cannot be explained by a single factor, for as Maslow emphasized, ". . . it is unusual, not usual, that an act or conscious wish have but one motivation."[7] In this paper, an attempt has been made to show that there are multiple simultaneous influences on newly captured PWs when they decide to resist their captors. They make decisions using the best means available, given that death is not an option and that constant torture in the ropes makes strict adherence to name, rank, serial number and date of birth a non-viable option. This decision which all prisoners must eventually make can be termed "defensive wisdom."[8]

Resistance as a manifestation of defense takes many forms of tactics as well as varying extremes. The former is a function of a man's assessment of his situation and his determination of what may be required of him while the latter depends upon stress and pain tolerance. For this

reason, each man endures torture for varying lengths of time. Whereas it is impossible to affix time limits of acceptability to torture endurance because of different pain of thresholds and tolerances; no one can judge a man's physical resistance except himself. Vroom[9] approached this subject of individual variances when he postulated:

> . . . performance can be hypothesized to be a function of
>
> 1. the abilities the person perceives to be required to do the job.
>
> the degree the person perceives himself to possess those abilities.
>
> 3. the degree to which he values the possession of such abilities.

This quotation embodies the essence of PW resistance motivation, in that conviction often permitted extra ordinary physical feats.

The insistence that fear is a causal factor in initial behavior is consistent with Maslow's[10] theory that safety needs as a motivation are only one step removed from pure physiological needs. A person acts for security and safety reasons first. In that respect, a safety need is the influence that prompts one to give the minimum of information when the pain becomes unbearable. On the other hand, when a PW refuses to give demanded information, with full knowledge that he will be tortured again, the rationale of pride

and responsibility conflict with Maslow in that these higher personal fulfillment needs supplant the lower physiological and safety needs. He maintained that a level of physical well being is a pre-requisite for any act to transcend personal needs. Therefore by assigning primary causal value to pride and responsibility in a PW's choice to endure torture is to conflict with Maslow's tenet. But other exceptions to his basic theory such as personal self-denial, suffering for a cause, or martyrdom are common. However, in contrast to these purely unselfish acts, a PW's motives are ego-centered and thus represent a less drastic departure from the conclusions of Maslow.

In Eupsychian Management, Maslow[11] discussed perfect patriotism as being problem-centered as well as being ego-transcendent.[12] In prison it seems that the altruistic motive for resistance grows with the time one spends reflecting on his position and situation. However, the initial resistance response is existential in nature having roots in the stress of ultimate aloneness. Sartre[13] and others speak of the "self as a project" that comes to grips with being. Such a project is wholly created by the continued arbitrary choices of the individual himself.

It has been stated that initial behavior is instinctive. Instinct is used here in the classical sense[14] in that the newness of the environment dictates "trial and error" or

"best guess" behavior based on innate feelings. However, as the years of prison transform new captives into old timers, and the bitter lessons one learned, a man is better able to determine proper courses of action. His actions are still instinctive in the sense that behavior is limited by the goals perceived as attainable.[15] This prison maturity replaces earlier guesswork thereby enabling a PW to recognize the frequent fluctuations in the captor's attitude and take advantage of these changes for his own benefit.

CHAPTER III

LIVING ALONE

Hopefully, some understanding has been established as to the factors that influence PW behavior in the early periods of captivity, and empathy gained for how a man thinks and feels in a physically weakened condition. Such a physical state is readily induced by wound, wear from torture, long hours without sleep or a combination of all three. The influences on a new captive that stem from the hostile environment and those derived from emotional stress are difficult to separate. However, it is safe to at least conclude that a new PW is confused and mixed up and that the first months of adjustment are the most arduous.

The new captive is now thrust into another completely new and unnatural environment, that of living in solitary confinement. The uniqueness of living in solitary confinement can be better appreciated if one asks himself to recall when he has ever been without human companionship, and for how long a period. Most answers would be measured in hours. The impact of the PW solitary experience is revealed when one recalls that U. S. penal institutions and the 1949 Geneva Conventions on Prisoner of War Treatment set 30 days of solitary as maximum punishment. A poll of United States PWs captured in the DRV before 1969 reveals that 90% of the men

endured solitary living conditions for periods, ranging from a few days to more than four years, and an equal percentage had been subjected to physical torture. Men of varied personalities are affected by "solo" living in different ways. The combination of emotional stresses and physical hardships prompts hallucinations within some new prisoners. Some memories of the first days in Hanoi are confused and dotted with haunting recollections of irrational outbursts and disturbing dreams. The first several weeks of captivity might find each man waking in the morning with the prayerful hope he was merely having a nightmare which would fade with the light of day.

The physical condition of the cells within what became known as the "Hanoi Hilton" contributes to the depressive state of a new PW. An eight-foot by eight-foot concrete room, bare board bunks, a heavy, iron-braced door with a shuttered peephole, and a small barred window looking onto a wall crowned with broken bottles comprise the depressing appointments of his new home. The daily schedule is easily learned, but the two meals and an occasional bath and cigarette do not fill the endless hours of a prisoner's day. Although the sporadic bathing schedule provides a welcome respite from the oppressing heat of one's cell, the act of becoming clean and refreshed is accomplished with some difficulty. A PW's bath entails dipping cold water from a

tank resembling a horse trough and spreading it over one's body by means of a cup. To a "solo" prisoner, the daily fare of two meals has more value as a relief from boredom than as nourishment.

The sound of the turnkey opening doors announces the time to eat or bathe, but the rattle of keys at unscheduled times evokes fear and apprehension in the heart of the PWs during the early years. The approaching sound of keys toward a PW's door often means he will be called to a quiz.* Quizzes usually mean being called upon to do something against one's will. Thus, there is a feeling of relief when the jingle of keys fades into the distance or when another's door is opened. In this respect, a PW lives in constant anxiety as he waits his turn.

Another revelation of the low state of morale that plagues a prisoner living alone is illustrated by the prison camp requirement that a PW bow when in sight of a Vietnamese. This humiliating regulation is duly enforced when a PW resists or displays resentment. This degrading practice accentuates the depression a solo prisoner feels as a result of living conditions and ever-present anxiety.

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*The term "quiz" was coined by PWs to denote prisoner meetings with some Vietnamese representative of the camp structure. Quizzes could entail interrogation, propaganda, discipline, torture or indoctrination.

It ought not to be surprising that a PW seeks some contact with familiarity wherever he can find it. Association with anything familiar to him partially relieves the anxiety and affords some measure of contentment in these uncertain surroundings. Something so innocuous as smoking a cigarette provides a feeling of security in that the act of smoking is a familiar experience and to one who has tried a Vietnamese cigarette, it is obvious that an ulterior motive is required to enjoy it. This concept is somewhat akin to the pleasure derived from a cigarette at a time of extreme anxiety in that its value lies in the comforting association rather than the taste.

The pleasure derived from such familiar associations indicates the PW's desire to conquer his alien environment and to gain control of his emotions. Since knowledge is the armor by which we arm ourselves against adversity, a prisoner constantly strives to learn about his surroundings. Thus, the physical camp layout, the guard change schedule and the turnkey's idiosyncrasies are all objects of study. A person knows he operates better in familiar surroundings or when he possesses the "homecourt" advantage. The PW subconsciously realizes that action under extreme emotional stress provides a poor basis for rational behavior. He is motivated to establish a better platform from which to act. Thus, familiar associations and knowledge of surroundings

provide some small advantage.

A universal indulged activity of a solo PW's is to peer through cracks, under doors or through the bars in the hope of seeing another PW. Despite Vietnamese efforts to avoid even sight contact between Americans, a fleeting glimpse is occasionally available as a Yank shuffles from his cell to a quiz or to pick up his chow. This propensity to see a friend is another indication of a search for the familiar in an effort to combat loneliness. Finally, the day comes when an "old head" is able to communicate with the "new" man. By means of a few well chosen words, spoken or written, the new man is given the tap code used for clandestine communication among PWs, advice on prison pitfalls, words of encouragement and the senior officer's policy of resistance, called BACK-US.* This information is passed at great risk to the transmitter, for the camp maintains strict regulations against communication with any PW who is not your roommate. This stipulation is enforced by

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*BACK-US was an acronym which contained the essence of the senior officer's resistance policy in the Little Vegas area of the Hanoi Hilton in 1967. Each letter reqpresented the following:

B--don't Bow when in front of cameras.
A--stay off the Air, i.e., don't read on camp radio.
C--you are not a Criminal.
K--don't Kiss the Vietnamese good-bye by making good statements when we leave.
US--Unity before Self.

guards roaming the halls of the Hanoi Hilton who report even suspected violations to camp officers. To be caught means severe torture, as many prisoners would learn during the communication purges.

The discovery of how to communicate with others by tapping on the walls is truly an event of elation to a solo man. His world enlarges and he is no longer so alone. Subsequent communication through long hours of judicious tapping reveals to him that others have survived and he is now a member of a dedicated group which has a common goal, honorable survival. The only payment requested of the new man for the invaluable aid he receives is to provide some news from the outside.

A man named Ho Chi Minh once said, "Communication is the lifeblood of resistance." The impact of communicating is precisely that of the PW. For some PWs, covert communication is their sole contact with others over a period of months and years. Any device capable of making noise may be used to transmit information of the highest priority or idle chatter to pass the time. It is a method of disseminating information from senior officers, of recounting questions and impending events learned at quizzes, of spreading names of new and old PWs for memorization, and of passing rumors, biographies and bad jokes. But most importantly, it is a way to conquer being alone and uninformed.

To successfully accomplish communication without being detected is the first taste of victory for a PW who dwells in a place designed for losers.

A man in solitary with only rats for roommates spends a great deal of time in thinking and it is not surprising that the thoughts of a new PW center on his predicament. His attitude is a poignant mixture of feeling sorry for himself as a fall guy and as one with a duty to perform. Thoughts center on assessing one's situation, prospects and the dilemma of how to exist, a dilemma which prevails for years. Reflection concerning the war is subject to the constant Vietnamese propaganda which the camp authorities provide through a crude wooden encased radio speaker in the window. Fortunately for the PW, the broadcasts are very naive and intended for someone with no more than a seventh grade education or the right psychological set.

The PW's attempt to evaluate his situation prompts a circular reasoning that meanders through the present, past, back to the present and ultimately to the future. When one accurately assesses the war, as he knew it prior to being shot down, certain questions begin cropping up: Who really cares about PWs? How often does anybody think of one who is a PW? What reasons are there to expect the war to end in one, two, three . . . years? Such questions recall to mind stories concerning German PWs held many years in the U.S.S.R. and the possible correlation to Americans now being held in

an Oriental prison camp. Such reflection does little to raise a man's spirits, but does cause him to dwell on the losses he must accept because he is a PW.

There are family considerations: how will loved ones be cared for; what impact will a man's prolonged absence have on his wife or children; how will the children fare without a father; and what answers can a mother give to a child's probing questions?

The sense of deprivation is accentuated by lost opportunities of family and career, and by experiences that are never to be regained. The finality of such an impression might drive some men to despair. But although there are moments of morose self-pity, with futility seeming to fan the fires, no one gives up. The spark of hope remains alive, and how it is done is locked in the mind of every PW who endures these endless hours alone.

The biggest question a PW poses to himself is, "How would I live my life if I were to live it over again?" To answer such a question a man recalls many events and decisions of his past life and how alternate decisions might have altered his present circumstances. A mental playback of the events leading to his capture provides hours of speculative thought as to what went wrong. Pondering the decisions made earlier in life raise a fantasy of foregone occupations. The life of a school teacher, a businessman

or an airline pilot now seems to have greater appeal and when one dwells on his past, thoughts linger on pleasant memories reconstructed in fine detail. Ultimately the question, "Why was that particular event enjoyable or important?" causes one to evaluate himself and ask, "What is important? What do I value?" The examination of one's values might cause reflection on subjects such as relationships with God, the family, other people, things or ideas. More questions come to mind:

Questions about God:

Does a Supreme Being exist?

What is He really like?

What do I owe Him?

What does He owe me?

Questions for oneself:

What do I think of myself?

Do I like me?

What don't I like about myself?

How do others see me?

Do I care how others see me?

And, finally, one considers his duty and his relationship with others:

Questions on duty:

When is my duty to God?

When is my duty to myself?

When do others come first?

When do commitment and responsibility take priority? These are the type of introspective questions men in a PW camp implicitly ask themselves, and by answering these questions, a man must admit to his philosophy of life. When one examines the virtues that are important to him, he forms guidelines of action that apply to all situations.

One man chose to consider things alphabetically from abortion to zymurgy in order to determine his likes or dislikes and their worth, good or evil. While others employ less rigid formats, all PWs at some point consider their values and place them in a hierarchy. A solitary, lonely man has the opportunity to learn a great deal about himself and his deficiencies and to consider which things are worthwhile. Later, when PWs are living in groups, there is a general quest for knowledge. This desire to improve oneself, initiated while living alone, has motivated a large number of returnees to seek additional schooling.

The surfacing of values, the examining of past goals and the facing of the reality of a prisoner of war situation lead most PWs to consider the dilemma of the present. Each man who has been forced to act against his will during initial interrogations experiences some feeling of guilt. Before talking to other PWs, each man perceives himself to be the only one who has given information. But every man

knows he cannot endure the Vietnamese rope torture indefinitely without giving some information. The natural outcome of this thought process is to form a workable plan for the future, namely, how to honorably survive and resist in the trials that lay ahead.

These reflections, introspections and plans help the solitary PW grow and understand the prisoner of war situation and the role he must play. Thus, his values become a motivational force to resist, to better himself and, ultimately, to guide his relationships with other PWs.

The early solitary period of captivity is marked by a high frequency of quizzes. No doubt these are intended by the Vietnamese to determine what type of prisoner a new man might become. Thus, there is ample opportunity for the prisoner to employ his newly devised plan of intended action. One is always taken from his cell to a designated room to be quizzed alone, a practice that would continue throughout the time of captivity. So, during these times, a man is always on his own with only his convictions for support. One might say the general PW attitude at quiz, knowing one can be forced to comply, is never to give "something for nothing," i.e., no information is given as long as the prisoner is capable of resistance. It is not only a form of resistance, but also a point of pride as well. The degree to which a man is able to adhere to his principles and

planned course of action represents the satisfaction level of his performance.

Each prisoner has his own opinion of tactics employed by the interrogators during quizzes. However, several generalities seem to be widely held. The Vietnamese quizzer needs to feel he is the one in control. Therefore, a direct challenge to his authority cannot go unanswered. It is not necessary for the PW to yield control of himself to the quizzer, but merely to convey the impression of such. This attitude does not imply compliance on the prisoner's part. There are many instances when an uncooperative PW is told by the interrogator, "You know I can force you to answer, don't you?" When the PW acknowledged, "Yes, you most likely can," the question or demand is often dropped.

It is also generally agreed that an interrogator has some preconceived answers to the questions he asks concerning military matters and covert PW activities. If the PW perceives these desired answers to be erroneous, his responses are given to reinforce the error, thus, leading the Vietnamese further from the truth. However, when the Vietnamese has a correct answer in mind, the prisoner's attempt to create doubt in the interrogator's mind is usually a better tactic than a flat denial of fact. Of course, these deceptive methods are not perfect, and, when unsuccessful, the PW ends up in ropes, on his knees holding up the wall, sitting on

the stool or in some other form of punishment.

Within each man who has spent months of solitude pondering his past, present and future, there is a curiosity to determine if his conclusions are in accord with others of common cause. Largely for this reason, PWs frequently discuss their feelings when the opportunity eventually presents itself. These conversations often reveal supportive judgments as well as new areas of consideration. By the same rationale, the conclusions of motive and behavior expounded in this paper should be compared with accepted scientific theories.

It has been proposed that the solo PWs propensity to peek through cracks at other PWs and his strong desire to communicate have their roots in the individual's search for familiarity on more comfortable ground. Such an idea is similar to the need for affiliation[1] or in the social needs described by Maslow when he wrote:

> If both physiological and safety needs are fairly well gratified, there will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs . . . . Now the person will feel keenly, as never before, the absence of friends or a sweetheart, wife or children. He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general . . . .[2]

This statement seems to explain the loss of love, affection and belonging a solitary PW feels. However, Maslow implied these higher social needs are present only

when one's basic physiological and safety needs are satisfied. It may seem strange to say a PW locked in solitary confinement has his physiological and safety needs satisfied, but compared to his capture and initial interrogation, this is the case. Once a PW is familiar with his surroundings and the prison routine, there are periods when he feels secure in his cell. When he has no great bodily pain or when the time of day and the lack of camp activity indicate he will not be called to quiz, the adverse effects of anxiety and emotional stress are lessened. It is in these periods of relative security that a PW indulges in introspection.

It is equally easy to equate the PW's search for a familiar association with a need for security. Therefore, as one becomes familiar with his surroundings, he may direct his thoughts and actions upward. Hertzberger[3] claimed there is a "hygienic factor" that constitutes a certain minimum condition for any positive motivation. This supports the contention that while consuming uncertainty is present, a PW's behavior is cognitively instinctive in the classical sense. When he becomes familiar with his environment and some element of stability is present, his thinking becomes more creative.

There are several explanations which support the relationship of emotion to constructive thought and future plans.[4] A mental search for problem-solving alternatives

may be prompted by the depression a PW experiences from the sense of loss, the emotional stresses, and the responsibility. Or is it simply the manifestations of a self-actualizing man? To be self-actualizing, it is assumed one is a psychologically healthy person with a deisre to know and learn as well as an efficient perception of reality.[5] Maslow admitted insufficient studies have been conducted on emotion, particularly regarding its good effect:

> The emotional aspects of cognition, i.e., the lift that comes with insight and the calming effect of understanding . . . could be factors of growth and motivation.[6]

There is also something Maslow termed a "peak experience."[7] that seems germane. This is a rather metaphysical concept that transcends physical shortcomings. He described a peak experience as ". . . a self-validating, self-justifying moment which carries its own intrinsic value with it[8] . . . It is the ability of the whole to rise above the parts . . . ."[9] This concept is unique since it is a physical experience that transcends the physical and brings emotional satisfaction as one becomes more acutely aware of his value and purpose. A person's perception of his intrinsic uniqueness occurs on only rare occasions in life. The uplifting and satisfying effects of such an experience can be likened to the value of contemplation as opposed to merely thinking, joy as opposed to happiness, and aesthetic reward as opposed

to monetary reward. The first time one is subject to the true love experience he knows this awe-struck reaction.

The PW has a peak experience when he makes a truly maximum effort to physically resist torture. It may be the first time in his life that he musters every ounce of physical strength, mental courage and determination. The wholeness of being he feels is truly unique; and even when this maximum effort, with nothing held back, proves to be not enough, one at least feels pure and satisfied for having done his absolute best. Such an experience usually leaves a PW broken and physically disabled, but the integrating and elevating effect is of great value to him.

CHAPTER IV

LIVING IN GROUPS

Now that the motivational highlights of the PW as an individual have been examined, it seems germane to shift attention to the prisoner's life as he exists among other PWs, living in a small cell with two, three or four men, and later with a larger group of twenty or more men. The considerations of the group life will not concentrate on motivation alone, but will include other factors which influence the PW's behavior within a group. Attention will be given to individual behavior as appropriate, but the main purpose will be to examine how the group operates and what effect the group has upon the individual. These effects varied among men because of the time period. Small group living conditions commenced for some in 1965, while others did not have roommates until 1968.

Life in an eight by eight-foot cell with one, two or three other men is nearly as unique an experience as living alone. However, the absence of loneliness makes coping with the difficulties associated with small group living easier. The companionship of fellow PWs also helps a man endure the anguish associated with loss of family and freedom. The axiom "misery loves company" holds true. Close conditions, where four men eat, sleep and perform hygienic functions

in the same room, require some adjustment and concession by all concerned. Individual physical traits of snoring, body odor, tidiness and eating habits or personality idiosyncrasies of vulgar speech, braggadocio and loquaciousness can cause strained relations among roommates. However, with few exceptions, the U. S. officers interned in North Vietnam do learn the need for compromise and self-sacrifice for the good of the group. These are not new concepts to a PW, for they have become inherent to a PW's behavior since the time of capture.

Accommodation becomes a way of life and various means are employed to make existence tolerable. One such means is to routinize the events of the day and to maintain a certain rigidity of that routine. Planning such common events as exercising, sweeping the floor, cleaning the cell, telling stories and the time of communication with other cells serves a two-fold purpose. It gives an element of order to life, and permits some control of one's action. Living within prison walls means one's life is constantly regulated by the prison authorities. A prisoner must perform the most common daily acts of eating, bathing, rising and going to bed at a time designated by someone else, and the schedule is subject to frequent unannounced changes. The value of order and self-control can be better appreciated in the light of the prisoner uncertainties and required compliances.

Routine also permits a PW the opportunity to do something different from time to time in order to relieve boredom. An example would be to not exercise on the Fourth of July, or to let another man empty the "honey bucket" because it is a man's birthday. Thus, to deviate from the routine becomes a form of celebration.

Another practice that may seem humorous when perceived from the United States "land-of-plenty" viewpoint is a method by which PWs, in some small groups, parcel out food. Inequities in portions often exist as meals come into the cell. The best method of handling this potential trouble spot is to raffle off the meals, and to rely on the "luck of the draw" method for distribution. Such procedures ultimately become a source of entertainment as homemade dice are cast to determine which bowl of soup each man receives.

An important element of harmony is a sense of humor in the <u>illegitimae non carborundum</u> sense. The ability to laugh in the face of adversity is a valuable asset. It is difficult to express how great it feels to laugh after months of crying. The man who finally has a roommate following months of solitary living is ready to laugh at anything, and the slightest provocation prompts uncontrollable hysterics. A sense of humor is a valuable asset over the years, not only in accommodating roommates, but there

is also an element of "sick prison humor" in the most dire situations. Even at the time, one could find a bit of humorous irony in being tortured to write a statement that he is being treated well. Since the situation appears humorous even today, perhaps the sickness still prevails.

Another important point needs to be emphasized. Living together in a small prison cell means constant association and interaction for twenty-four hours a day, not the mere eight hours a day at work or at home that most people equate with "knowing a person." In that respect, when a PW has the same roommate for two, three, four and five years, it is safe to conclude they know each other better than they know their wives.

The exchange of ideas that takes place among men in a common predicament and the knowledge they gain from each other have a broadening effect on one's perspectives. There is no need to hide one's feelings on a subject for image purposes, because one has no image or facade. Roommates know each other in their true colors, and within the sanctity of one's small cell, the familiarity among PWs prompts an open expression of opinions on many subjects that are not usually discussed at cocktail parties or in rap sessions.

This atmosphere of frankness and the commonality of the situation make resistance behavior, its methods, limits

and consequences, a popular subject for examination. The proposed courses of action are usually a consensus view rather than the dictates of the senior member of the group. The ultimate authority rests with the senior man, but "having one's say" removes the resentment associated with an authoritarian environment and more firmly commits members of the group to a program they have helped to formulate. However, group decisions tend to require less stringent courses of action than those individually formed. Perhaps this stems from a man's proud belief that his above-the-norm capability demands higher standards.

Even small group membership enables a man to project his thinking beyond concerns for his own survival. Resistance may now be viewed as a contribution to the war effort as well as individual responsibility. The adverse effects of his compliance versus resistance whether on himself, the prisoners and his country, become more vivid when shared and discussed with roommates in the same predicament. Thus, as a man lives in closer union with his fellow PWs, his motives are more likely to become less selfish.

Consensus decisions, common problems and close quarters generate unity and esprit among members of the small group. The recognized need for a united front generates a cohesiveness and comradery necessary if a group is to be effective.

An indication that PWs possess these qualities and care

for one another is evidenced by the atmosphere of gloom which hangs in the room when a cellmate is at quiz. Genuine concern for others promulgates itself through unselfish acts of sharing, cheering-up each other or communicating at great risk with a solo man purely for his psychological needs.

Communication is a medium that provides a sense of group accomplishment for it requires group effort. This function often requires two men to visually clear the area by watching for approaching guards while the other two men "communicate" in different directions. Each successful occasion produces a euphoric satisfaction within the group. This reaction may appear overstated, but to a group whose purpose is primarily negative, that is, not doing something, to accomplish anything in a positive manner is significant.

Before proceeding further to the consideration of larger groups as a unit, it seems appropriate to make some subjective observations of isolated individual behavior. These observations are not so much intended to evaluate men's character as they are to dispel the notion that United States PWs held in the DRV were a group of super humans, and to show that throughout the period of captivity, men maintained their individuality.

Let us look back to October of 1969, when the treatment of PWs improved. True, it did not require much effort on the part of the DRV to improve treatment from its prior

level when torture abounded, solitary confinement was common, and very few men had written or received mail. The most significant improvement was that torture stopped. When the PWs were grouped in large numbers and this alteration of the Vietnamese disposition was recognized, it prompted a charge of attitude in a few PWs. In this arena of sanctuary from physical abuse, some men discovered a boldness within themselves, and felt compelled to exhibit ultimate resistance.

This could be called the "irons theory" in that PWs challenged the camp authorities to put them in leg irons and handcuffs again. Its advocates now considered the routine morning and night "head count lineup" in the larger cells and other minor camp restrictions to be harassment that should be resisted. They seemed to have forgotten that for years prisoners were humiliated by the requirement to bow in the presence of a Vietnamese. Now in the atmosphere of relaxed camp discipline, the "iron men" found it personally elevating to curse and ridicule a guard in a language the guard could barely understand, if at all. It may not be surprising that these hard line beliefs did not surface until prisoners lived in large communities where the visibility of toughness had a larger audience. It was also noteworthy that these men were not those of senior rank with whom the final authority and responsibility rested. And, in fact, this antagonistic behavior conflicted with the

"live and let live" policy issued by the senior officers during periods of relative calm.

There might have been an element of sincerity involved, or these men might have been motivated by the belief that prisoners should push for as much as they could get. The possibility also exists that an element of "one up-manship" or a desire to atone for less stiff resistance in the early years of captivity might have been present. However, it was obvious that a desire for self-esteem existed among those men.

Some other men had an individual motive for personal conduct that was not a group characteristic. These PWs were motivated to conduct themselves in a manner they believed would best represent the United States to the North Vietnamese because they felt the PWs were the only Americans with whom most North Vietnamese had contact. Although prison guards were by no means the elite of North Vietnamese society, they would eventually return to their villages and answer the inevitable question: "What were those Americans who bombed our country really like?" In other words, was the Vietnamese minister of propaganda really telling the truth that U. S. pilots were bloodthirsty, arrogant, insensitive criminals, as the people of North Vietnam were led to believe?

For this reason, some PWs felt there was no purpose

in trying to prove one's manhood through abusive language, open contempt and disdain for the Vietnamese people themselves or for their country as a nation. This is not to be construed to mean fraternization was condoned or to imply a softening of the line of resistance. These PWs believed that an attitude of aloofness, support of the U. S. government, and resisting propaganda efforts in a professional manner, were what would ultimately gain respect for a PW as a man. Puerile actions such as belittling the DRV and its citizens merely supported the communist claims that American PWs were the "blackest criminals in the DRV."

In November of 1970, most of the U. S. PWs were concentrated in one camp. This resulted from Vietnamese reaction to the United States commando raid on the Son Tay PW Camp rather than from a departure from their avowed separation policy. Communal living, with twenty to fifty men in a single cell, marked the final new experience for the PWs' run through the gamut of living conditions within the DRV. However, many facets of small group interpersonal relationships have application to the larger bodies.

Looking back at this final phase, some examples of formally organized group action and individual behavior will be cited. One will observe a difference in the prisoners' rationale when the PWs were organized and the threat of torture had subsided.

It was rather exciting to meet men whose names and backgrounds had been memorized, but whose faces were here-to-fore unseen. New friendships were born, common acquaintances and experiences were discovered, and time was passed listening to new stories and biographies. It was a time of high emotion compared to earlier drab existences, but as one man candidly remarked, "It is a bit depressing to hear so many tell their stories, and not hear one happy ending."

The nature of the PW organization within this larger camp was immediately structured in military fashion. Each cell had a senior ranking officer (SRO) with a staff of flight leaders. Every man was assigned to a flight with the flights alternating the menial housekeeping tasks of cleaning, distributing food, washing dishes and clearing for communicating.

Never did the Vietnamese permit contact between prisoners in different cells. In keeping with this policy of division, the senior officers were located in a rather remote section of the camp. The establishment and protection of communication means with them were vital to the organization. The methods devised were sometimes ingenious and extremely difficult. Those responsible for the transmission of information within the camp deserve a great deal of credit for a job well done. To some men communicating occupied so much of their time it became a way of life. Many noted

the fact that the same people were always involved with this task, and they became truly professional. However, this arrangement had a drawback in that those who were communicators tended to be a bit esoteric about their roles. The other men who provided the security eyes and ears, a task that usually required an uncomfortable physical position, occasionally speculated that some PWs communicated for the sake of communicating rather than to pass information.

This feeling, however, was only of minor importance, and because the close link was established between the leaders and the rest of the PWs, a rather elaborate set of goals was promulgated to all PWs from the senior officer and his staff.

These goals were embodied in what was known as the "plums." The plums covered many areas of duty in detail and identified our common goal. The compendium of those plums follows: to support the Code of Conduct by doing and saying nothing harmful to the U. S. interests, to actively resist propaganda efforts of the Vietnamese and to work together in order to go home with honor. These concepts were not new to the U. S. captives and had been implied by individual SROs previously. However, the assurance that everyone would be presenting a united front to the enemy increased the group's cohesiveness by defining a common purpose.

The organization of PWs was essentially involved with the Vietnamese in a struggle for control. The efforts of the captors to isolate, to restrict contact among prisoners, and to thwart any attempt at organization, were designed to insure their control of the PWs. The Vietnamese appeared to have an innate fear of an organized group of Americans, a situation that could have existed if the PWs had been governed by the terms stipulated in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, or allowed to live together en masse. Therefore, Americans held in North Vietnam were never granted PW status, but were continually referred to as "criminals" by the Vietnamese. By attributing any good treatment to their own benevolence rather than to the just right of prisoners, a sense of authority was maintained in the mind of the Vietnamese.

Now that security precautions dictated the PWs be concentrated in one camp, the camp authorities (as they always referred to themselves, thereby implying control) were especially wary. The Vietnamese never recognized military rank among PWs, and reference to a fellow PW as captain or major produced violent reaction on the part of the Vietnamese. With the grouping of large numbers of men into a single cell, the Vietnamese attempted to exert internal control by placing a junior officer as the man-in-charge, thus, reducing the structure and organization established by the PWs in that

room. This rather puerile effort was eroded through universal resistance, and internal control remained with the SRO ostensibly as well as in fact.

The idea of control is further typified by the manner in which the Vietnamese resisted any suggestion for camp improvement if it came from a PW regardless whether or not the suggestion would be mutually beneficial. They needed to feel the idea was completely their own. Thus, the PWs had to learn the indirect approach to gain improved conditions rather than using the cold, hard logic of Western thinking. To subtly plant the seed of an idea achieved better results than making direct request.

Earlier days had seen the requirement of PWs to bow before Vietnamese strictly enforced in an effort to break, humiliate and subjugate the PW. The rescinding of this regulation indicated tacit admission by the Vietnamese that control of another's body did not constitute control of his will. With this admission, quizzes and attempts at political indoctrination, humorously naive and ineffective as they might have been, ceased altogether and propaganda efforts lessened toward resisting PWs.

The question may arise within the reader as to why is constant reference made to the Vietnamese propaganda efforts. At this point a discussion of propaganda methods and objectives is appropriate if the PW's attitude toward

propaganda is to be fully understood. There is a distinct difference between propaganda for the purpose of indoctrinating prisoners and propaganda released to the world in order to sway public opinion. The first type of ineffectual indoctrination caused very little consternation among PWs and was often a source of entertainment or tidbits of news from the outside world. However, the public effect of propaganda which the Vietnamese sought to generate from within the prison could not be predicted and therefore was a primary target of a PW resistance efforts. The DRV made every effort to elicit world support for their cause through exploitation of the PWs. The Hanoi parade of PWs in 1966, the circulation of grotesque pictures of pilots taken immediately after capture, the coercing of PWs by torture to meet with foreign visitors to Hanoi, the torturing of PWs to write good treatment statements, or the circulation of deceptive photographs suggesting universal good treatment of prisoners were examples of such efforts. From the lessons of Korea, the PWs realized the harmful public effects these tactics could have on the U. S. war effort and on its allies. Therefore, a person was motivated to resist participation in these events as much as he was motivated not to give military information. Thus, when torture for such devious reasons ceased in the later years, the PW felt some sense of relief. No longer was one forced to do these things

against his will. An understanding of this perceived exploitation and the reasons for torture explains the bitterness of some returnees against the DRV.

Returning to the notion of controlling affairs within the camp, it should be noted that the prisoners had their own ideas of control and influence. When it was felt that the mail situation was intolerable, a letter writing moratorium was enacted in which only a few letters were written for a period of nine months. In this way it was planned to create some beneficial propaganda for the United States and the PWs. The desired public effect at home of no letter emanating from prison was to give the impression PWs were no longer allowed to correspond with their families. This would dispel any possible misconception that the treatment of PWs was good, and it was hoped subsequent pressure on the DRV would prompt the Vietnamese to distribute more mail.

At one time prisoners were forbidden to hold religious services, to form a choir, or to have any PW speak in front of the group. This restriction against religious services was met with a unified PW demonstration that challenged the Vietnamese control over the captives. When 350 PWs throughout the camp started to yell and sing in unison, the reaction of the Vietnamese was greater than had been anticipated. They actually thought a revolt was in progress. Several senior PW officers were taken out of the camp, and the camp

discipline was tightened. For several days the atmosphere within the camp was tense, but eventually the right to hold church services was won. Both the Vietnamese and the PWs realized each had over-reacted. However, struggles for camp control continued until the PWs were released.

Even though a man was dedicated to group goals, he remains very much an individual. This is particularly true of a collection of educated officers who retained their particular identity and thus there were some instances of individual needs motivating a person within the group. Some results were constructive, such as the power need of those who controlled the communications[1] or those who were prestige motivated, and thus, voluntarily filled the thankless roles of education officer, entertainment officer, cigarette control officer, doctor or chaplain when their rank did not warrant a role of leadership.[2]

There existed a small number whose possible need for attention caused them to develop psychosomatic aches and pains which bordered on hypochondria. This was especially disturbing to other PWs who had cared for and nursed back to health a seriously ill or severely wounded cellmate.

A few within the group could not resign themselves to accept camp improvement for fear such acceptance would compromise resistance. They felt it was the PW's duty to suffer. Therefore, if a prisoner accepted any form of

improved treatment, such as writing a Christmas card home or the use of a pencil and paper, he would not be performing his duty.

Contrast their behavior with that of the Allied prisoners held at Colditz, Germany, where some of the most escape-bent men of World War II were held. Those World War II heroes might chuckle at the American PW's qualms over accepting beer at Christmas or refusing packages from home. Reid,[3] himself a former Colditz PW, described times when they had an occasional beer, received semi-monthly packages, had access to books and even had use of a grand piano on a special occasion. Yet the men held at the German maximum security camp were considered, by some standards, the toughest prisoners of that war.

Perhaps reluctance to accept camp improvements in the DRV prisons could be explained by Maslow's metagrumble theory[4] where such qualms could be present only in a truly self-actualizing man as he strove for perfection, and thus, rejected any compromise. A more likely explanation would be that the PWs possessed a basic distrust of the Vietnamese and their motives. Such an attitude was not without foundation. The North Vietnamese made propaganda a way of life and used religious services, medical treatment and PW mail as bribes or exploitation. Small wonder that a popular expression among PWs was, "Beware of Gooks bearing

gifts."

The final points of this analysis will center on the attitudes within the formal PW organization which motivated its members in the final years. Motivation continued to become more altruistic or patriotic than egoistic within the framework and climate of the formal PW organization generated from large group living. However, it is difficult to distinguish between the two for men who had always resisted the enemy. When a man was motivated by adherence to his values, was he an egotist because he felt he owed a duty to himself, or was he a patriot because his values conformed with those of most people in the United States? The protection of a united organization provided an atmosphere that enabled thinking to be more long range and altruistic. A certain security was felt and a better opportunity was provided to perform as honorable men as outlined in the organizational objectives. Could it be that the decision to support and participate in the activities of the large PW group was derived from agreement with its goals, or was it a desire to gain the personal protection afforded by group membership? There existed the moral obligation one felt to fulfill his contract as a military officer. Perhaps a man was motivated by pure love of his country, or was it a hatred of communism? Was the PW's philosophy pragmatic or idealistic?

It appeared that the PW was duty motivated and tended to be more altruistic as he became more actively a part of the larger PW organization. The ego-centered pride motivation of initial captive days expanded to include consideration of other PWs and ideals. However, embodied within that duty were as many factors as there are caveats in the label of patriotism.

It has been stated before that PWs resisted making statements harmful to the U. S. and its allies. But that is not to say the PWs agreed one hundred percent with all aspects of the war in Vietnam and the way in which it was conducted. Discussions among PWs who were determined resistors found advocations that covered the entire spectrum of popular thought. The group of United States PWs in North Vietnam represented both liberal and conservative political philosophies. However, there was universal agreement that the PW camp was not the place from which to air those views to the world. A PW had an obligation--yes, duty--to conduct himself in the manner expected of a PW as embodied in the spirit of the Code of Conduct.

It was also the duty of a PW to remain a PW until released through government channels. Such reasoning would lead to the conclusion that nearly universal rejection of

the early releases by the DRV of a few officer PWs* from 1968 to 1972 was a cohesive factor. The criticism of those accepting parole ranged from vocal condemnation to charitable doubt, but there was no one who defended the acceptance of early release as honorable behavior for an officer. The determination to avoid such stigma was a binding influence among resisting prisoners.

One last observation is important. PWs in general felt that they had invested a long time serving as PWs in the war. Most of these men did not want to abandon a position they had held so long by virtue of the United States government admitting defeat or its inability to win. Hence, the men clung to their position of resistance to the last day. Some might call this irrational or just plain stubborn. But many PWs often said, after having spent more than six years in prison, they were willing to spend another year if it meant the difference between walking out of Vietnam or crawling out. They meant it!

The task of comparing PW communal life to standard group behavior theories is enormous. No doubt many aspects

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*Of the PWs who were released early, only one man went home with the permission of the senior American officer in camp. No stigma was attached to this seaman's release by any PWs. His resistance had been exemplary from capture to release.

of this prisoner existence will fill books of the future. However, since these men will receive public evaluation collectively, as did the Korean PWs, it does seem appropriate to conduct an examination of the Vietnam PW organizational effectiveness. In the light of the description that has been provided, some learned group theories will be discussed. The unique circumstances of PW existence requires that parallels be drawn with PW groups in other wars in order to evaluate the U. S. PW organization in the DRV.

An appropriate criteria by which to measure the effectiveness of any group is contained in the Field Theory of Lewin, The Interaction Process Analysis of Bales, and The Homan Group Theory.[5] These men have designated many factors that influence an organization's productivity, but some are more germane to this discussion than others.

A common factor for a successful group in the theories of Bales and Homan is the requirement of positive interaction. The interaction among people who had lived in confined quarters had been present whether desired or not. A characteristic of American PWs in the DRV had been their willingness to promulgate to all fellow captives personally tragic or triumphant prison experiences. Accounts of torture sessions, quizzes or personal thoughts had been related regardless of whether a man's participation had been a point of pride or shame. Such revelations had helped others

to learn vicariously and represented nearly perfect interaction. Events that occurred throughout the camp were transmitted to everyone. Sometimes listening to a PW sweep the hall or the camp courtyard with the tap-code rhythm was slightly reminiscent of listening to the evening news events of the day.

Another standard of groups is contained in the writings of Lewin [6] who held cohesion to be the key element of a successful group and tied it directly to the productivity of the body. Cohesion referred basically to the complex of forces that bind the members of a group together. The satisfactions, the degree of closeness, the amount of pride, the ability to meet crises and the willingness to be frank and honest in expressing ideas among members of the group were some criteria needed for cohesiveness. Lewin's concept of cohesiveness provided an apt description of the Vietnam War PWs. The common goals, united actions and other instances previously cited support this contention.

The element of cohesiveness was an oft-mentioned factor lacking among Korean PWs. Segal [7] cited opportunistic behavior and the lack of concern for others as a major factor which distinguished "the participator" from "the resistor" among American PWs in Korea. He stated that 38% of the Korean PWs had little or no concern for their fellow PWs and 49% expressed only moderate concern.

Reiners[8] noted that for German PWs in the Soviet Union (WW II), the physical and mental stress caused a breakdown of group norms, and life within the camp became a case of every man for himself.

To illustrate the Vietnam PWs concern for his fellow man, the distribution of food will serve as an example. The previously mentioned "luck-of-the-draw" method of parcelling out food not only assured equal shares, but was also a precaution against someone giving away part of his meager ration to another who appeared to need it more. It was standard practice among U. S. PWs in North Vietnam to give a sick man all the food he could eat. Generous men often went hungry in order that a sick man might regain his strength. When PWs lived in large groups, this practice placed no great hardship on anyone, but the ailing man often found himself deluged with more food than he could possibly consume. The sick man often received so much attention from well-meaning roommates that he was almost killed with kindness.

The Vietnamese occasionally offered extra food to PWs they considered extremely thin or weak. This extra ration was often refused for fear of the strings attached and in the hope all PWs would receive more to eat; but if accepted, it was always shared among mates of the smaller cells.

Many PWs displayed concern for their fellows through

genuine charitable acts too numerous to mention. Adler[9] coined the word gemeinschaftsgefuhl to describe such genuine concern for one's fellow man.

In regard to the PW's association with his captors, this paper has given considerable attention to the organized struggle for control waged by the PWs in the DRV. Reid[10] mentioned "Goon baiting" (systemized harassment of the German guards) as a weapon used in the prison cold war between captors and captives at Colditz. He also described how the unified PWs at Colditz succeeded in disrupting German propaganda broadcasts to the point that these broadcasts were discontinued.[11] Perhaps the constant struggle for control of the situation and the unified resistance contributed much to distinguish the men of Colditz and the Hanoi Hilton from their Korean counterparts. Although there were numerous examples of heroic individual resistance in Korean prison camps, there appeared to be very few unified efforts to better their position. Segal[12] points to the Turkish PWs in Korea as the one exception to the lack-of-unity rule that prevailed. Reiners[13] cited the reluctance of German generals captured at Stalingrad (WW II) to organize resistance as a factor of German PW complacency. The senior officers became members of such pro-Soviet groups as the NKFD (National Komite Fries Deutschland) and other anti-Facism organizations. Other PWs perceived membership in

these groups to be a fait accompli if the generals belonged to them. Therefore, there was no organized resistance to such activities, and other acts of cooperation with the Soviets followed.

The most comprehensive set of standards for a successful group was stated by Shepherd.[14] He listed five features by which to measure group effectiveness:

1. Objectives: Is its purpose the same as that of its members?
2. Role Differentiation: Does each member know what is required of him?
3. Values and Norms: Is that which is desired and that which is expected clear?
4. Membership: Is the membership clearcut and heterogeneous?
5. Communication: No one withholds relevant information.

All of these features as they apply to the U. S. prisoner organization in Vietnam have been examined within this paper. It is left to the reader to pass judgment on the organized group's effectiveness.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the examination of the behavior and motivations of United States prisoners of war held in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam particular emphasis has been given to the influence of environmental conditions, the emotional state of men, and the mutual support of other prisoners. Motivational elements of pride, responsibility and individual values have been stressed. Group characteristics of cohesiveness, interaction and unity have also been illustrated as a means by which the PWs sought to control their destiny. These factors have not been an all-inclusive set. Different drives prompted different men, and no two stories of captivity were the same.

This abbreviated discussion of prison life may have provided some appreciation for the shrunken world of a prisoner of war. The remoteness of the war, the obscurity of U.S. national objectives and the proximity of personal threat posed a dilemma for PWs. One might contend that life in prison was a constant dilemma of choices: safety versus growth, defense versus offense and the practical versus the ideal. Each PW by necessity made these choices repeatedly. The motives came from his inner values and the encouragement was supplied by fellow PWs.

The discussion and conclusions concerning the motives

and behavior of men are uncertain by nature. An attempt to translate the intention of others and yourself, ex post facto, is fraught with the danger of distortion. There is also possibility of misrepresenting reality when an author isolates an event from its time reference or quotes out of context. Trying to isolate motives from the entire pattern of complex man can be equally imperfect. However, continual day-to-day contact with more than one hundred U. S. military officers who endured over five years as prisoners of war in Vietnam and personal experiences lead me to conclude that all the factors mentioned above affected prisoner conduct. More importantly, it should be stressed again that the high standards of behavior the U. S. PWs demanded of themselves were largely due to the personal integrity of these men. From one who has spent considerable time in their midst, there is nothing but the highest regard for them as military officers. America is fortunate to have been represented by such a select group under the most trying of circumstances.

NOTES

Chapter II

1. David A. Kolb, et al., Organizational Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 110.

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3. James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1958), p. 10-11.

4. Ibid., p. 140.

5. Kolb, p. 140.

6. Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1968), p. 13.

7. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 23.

8. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 54.

9. Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 64.

10. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 39.

11. Abraham H. Maslow, Eupsychian Management, A Journal (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin and Dorsey, 1965), p. 19.

12. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 37.

13. Ibid., p. 12-14.

14. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 88.

15. Ibid., p. 31.

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1. Kolb, Organizational Psychology, p. 110.

2. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 43.

3. Schein, Organizational Psychology, p. 59.

4. March and Simon, Organizations, p. 180.

5. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 48, 153.

6. Ibid., p. 283.

7. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 71.

8. Ibid., p. 79.

9. Ibid., p. 2.

Chapter IV

1. Kolb, Organizational Psychology, p. 125.

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8. W. O. Reiners, Soviet Indoctrination of German War Prisoners 1941-1956 (Cambridge: Center for International Studies. MIT, March 1959, Unpublished Paper), p. 67.

9. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, p. 165.

10. Reid, Escape from Colditz, p. 431.

11. Ibid,, p. 101.

12. Segal, HUMRRO, p. 50.

13. Reiners, Soviet Indoctrination, p. 20.

14. Shepherd, Small Groups, p. 122.

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